

known people in our churches who looked and sounded like devout Christians; and then turned their backs on living for Jesus and never returned. Some leave **Intellectually** (1 John 2:22) and stop believing Jesus is who He says He is. Most do it **morally and ethically** (1 John 2:3-5) by returning to a life of sin. John says of those who did this in the First Century:

“They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their leaving showed that none of them belonged to us” (1 John 2:19).

(Note: Many who go back to living in sin, stay in the church; still believing they are on their way to heaven. Read what John says in 1 John 3:1-10).

We base our belief on the **promises of God**. God promises to give us **“eternal life”**. Our new life that comes from the new birth is “eternal”. If we can lose it in ten years or ten billion years it is not eternal. We base it on the **protection of God**. Jesus says, **“No one (including Satan) can snatch them out of my hand”**. Peter, who Satan targets the most in the gospels, calls him a **“roaring lion prowling around looking for someone to eat”** (1 Peter 5.) And he also said we are **“being protected by the power of God”** (1 Peter 1). “Protected” is a military term for a “garrison” of soldiers. Jesus tells us, **“To get to you, Satan has to go through Me.”**

We base it on the **powerful change of God** at conversion, and the new “life” it produces. Romans six says the person we **“were”** is **“dead and buried”** and who we **“are”** now is raised to live a **“new life”**. We become **“new creations”** (2 Corinthians 5). Only God can “create”; and all the demons of hell, working together, cannot “un-create” what God has created.

Job 17:9 says, **“The righteous holds to his way.”** Jesus says, **“My sheep follow Me.”** This is the “perseverance of the saints”. Ezekiel 36 says, **“I will give you a new heart / I will put my Spirit in you and cause you to walk in my commands.”** The “heart” in Scripture means our character, the

kind of person we are on the inside. Jesus says **“love”** comes from our hearts (Luke 10) and so does **“evil”** (Mark 7).

The word “cause” does not mean we lose our freedom. We are free to leave, but the power of God has gotten hold of us so much that nothing can make us truly **want** to leave. The feeling is temporary. We are like the little boy who ran away from home, leaving this note:

“Nobody loves me. Daddy works me too hard. Mama fusses at me. Jimmy steals my stuff. Sue tells stories about me. I am running away.

Love, Billy.”

We all know that little fellow didn’t get very far before he came back. When I first laid eyes on my baby daughters and grandchildren and they started yelling and smelling, I was free to say, **“Get this kid out of here and don’t bring him (or her) back.”** But I couldn’t. When their eyes looked at me and their chubby little fingers grabbed my finger, I was **“hooked”** for life.

This teaching fills us with the **peace of God**. Paul said, **“I am persuaded that He is able to keep (guard) what I committed to Him until that day”** (2 Timothy 1). I hesitated to commit my life to Christ, because I felt I was not strong enough to keep on living for Him. The truth is; I wasn’t. We are called to **“work out our own salvation in fear and trembling, because God is at work in us to make us want to do it and to have the power to do it.”**(Philippians 2).

God did not drive nails in the side of the ark and tell Noah’s family to hang on tight. He put them in the ark He designed and closed the door behind them (Genesis 6). At salvation He puts us in Jesus – our Ark. Jesus’ brother Jude, found that out and said in Jude 24-25:

“To Him who can keep you from falling and present you before His glorious presence without fault / be glory / throughout the ages. Amen!”

Don’t hesitate to come to Christ because you feel you cannot keep on living for Him. **He takes care of that; after we put our hand in His.**